1: Oran$ E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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556 riage connections by joining together families of approximately
[581] equal wealth and that it is an important source of power. There
[622] is a strong tendency for village officers and other members of
[624] founding lineages to be richer than later immigrants; hence wealth tends to be joined with hereditary office. In the informal councils which precede formal deliberations over disputes or policy, men listen more attentively to the statements of the wealthy. This attentiveness is a sign of respect, but also of recognition of the wealthy individual's ability to give or withhold favors; sometimes there is also the informal bribery of generous hospitality, and on occasion, outright bribes in return for support. Wealth differences can result in special likenesses and differences within Santal society, and even ceremonies graded in cost, as will be discussed later.

554 It would normally go without saying that those who hold
• 182 positions of special power and prestige have a special interest in the preservation of traditional solidarity and provide a natural source of endogenous pressure for the maintenance of traditional structure. It receives mention here only because it will soon be shown that other circumstances make these same privileged Santal especially subject to tribally disintegrative centrifugal pressures.

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workers, was founded as an ordinary agricultural village not more than about sixty years ago. But such opportunities decreased throughout the nineteenth and this century. One inevitable result was to increase wealth differences and to make them more permanent.

A major consequence of increased wealth differences has been the strain placed on internal solidarity by "envy" (*hisa*; Hindi: *hinska*) and even more by fear of "envy." What this term conveys is concealed malicious intent based upon desire for what another possesses. Though Santal society has long been plagued with accusations of witchcraft, the notion that its practice is almost invariably deliberate and that it arises from envy is of modern origin. Though it is recognized that men may be "envious," it is thought that females most often are guilty and that it is only they who practice witchcraft. Fertile grounds for envy, and attendant witchcraft, appeared when wealthy Santal began using their capital to hire other Santal, to loan money, paddy, and seed at interest, to buy forest land, and even in a few cases to invest in various small-scale enterprises. Relations arising from these investments are often strained and a source of resentment. Envy also arises from observation of what wealth procures in terms of traditional Santal pleasures and from its use in settling disputes.

Aside from the exacerbation of "envy," which increased wealth differences produced, the market imposed other, more general strains. It is difficult to square the basic reciprocity of relations in a kin society like that of the Santal with the impersonal and contractual relations of the market. Though the Santal struggle over land with as much ferocity as any peasants, they find it hard to insist on strictly market relations with other commodities, especially if pressed by kinsmen. A few Santal

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125 miles away from Jamshedpur, the nearest major city. The following frequences of the different forms of marriage were obtained from this sample:

DB	*SB*	*TD*	*NB*	*Total Number*
5 (10%)	20 (40%)	9 (18%)	16 (32%)	50 (100%)

182 Since the four varieties of marriage are graded in terms of cost, it is reasonable to plot farmer's per capita income against marriage form chosen to determine the degree to which income is associated with the form chosen. The figures given in Table 2 are in terms of maunds of husked paddy per person per year after taxation. A maund weighs approximately eighty lbs.

Converting these figures into percentages, one notes that eighty per cent of *DB* fall in the greater-than-thirty-maund category, eighty per cent of *SB* in the greater-than-ten-maund category, 55 per cent of *TD* in the greater-than-ten-maund category, and only twelve per cent of *NB* in the greater-than-ten-maund category. The association between marriage form and per capita income is obvious and consistent throughout. It suggests that per capita income is the largest single determinant of marriage-type choice.

182 Of the other possible countable determinants, the possibility that having either a father or a mother alive at the time of marriage might be significant was considered, since there were

information we requested. The same sampling procedure was used in the case of the *buttee* residents living in the *buttee* at the time of marriage. The nineteen were obtained from two villages in Mayurbhanj; fifteen of these were from Fanderkuta and the other four from the control village. In Fanderkuta the sample seemed ideal since data was obtained from every male in one "Section" (*tola* as in Hindi) of the village. However, over half of these informants had ultimately to be excluded from the sample since they had worked in surrounding mines prior to marriage.

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TABLE 2

CHOICE OF MARRIAGE FORM BY FARMERS BY PER CAPITA INCOME

Maunds per capita	*Marriage Forms*				*Income Class Total*
	DB	*SB*	*TD*	*NB*	
0–10	0	4	4	10	18
11–20	0	11	3	3	17
21–30	1	5	1	2	9
31–40	2	0	1	0	3
41	2	0	0	1	3
Total Number of Marriages	5	20	9	16	50

a few cases of comparatively well-off Santal without parents who had had an *NB*, and who explained that there was no one to arrange a marriage for them. Among the fifty sampled there were only six whose parents were both dead at the time of marriage. There were only three cases in which the father was living at the time of marriage and the mother not, and there were twenty-one cases in which only the mother was alive; however, there were no significant differences in these cases. It was therefore concluded that having a parent alive is seldom a determinant of marriage-type choice and that it is not generally relevant which parent is alive.[4]

One other type of countable information had to be considered: whether there was a shift in frequency during the forty-four-year period 1913 to 1957 in which these marriages occurred. The assembled data indicate that there were no sig-

[4] It might be significant in the very expensive *DB* but my sample was too small to detect its relevance.

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178 sent home at that time a larger portion of their income than
184 their fellows. Part of the money sent home was expended in
583 the celebration of arranged marriages, which for immigrant workers almost always take place in their native villages. The relatively large amount of money sent home by those who had arranged marriages reflects exceptionally strong ties with the native village; however, even most of these workers have subsequently reduced their rural contribution as their own nuclear-family requirements increased.

• 182 The crucial fact indicated by the following table is that if
434 one adds the industrial income of the workers at the time of
583 their marriage to the farm income of their rural families, the
184 combined per capita income is higher than that of the sample farmers. Since they must maintain separate households, these figures somewhat overstate available income for the workers. They clearly indicate, however, that the shift to *NB* cannot be attributed in any appreciable degree to lower income. Indeed even if one were to calculate per capita income of the *bustee* workers and their farming families solely on the rural income, the shift to *NB* could still not be accounted for simply by income.

Since those few migrant industrial workers who did have arranged marriages in fact sent home a large portion of their income before marrying, the inclusion of these resources in comparing marriage types seems realistic. Whereas farmers with per capita incomes of over ten maunds have only about 37% *NB*, 82% of the workers with similar income enter into such marriages. This comparison gives some indication of the degree to which the shift to *NB* runs counter to available income.

What must be explained is the shift away from the more

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TABLE 4

COMPARISON OF PER CAPITA INCOME OF *BUSTEE* WORKERS AND THEIR FARMING FAMILIES WITH THAT OF PREVIOUS FARMER SAMPLE

(Income Categories in Maunds Per Capita)*

	0–10	*11–20*	*20*	*Total*
Farmers	36	34	30	100%
Workers	21	34	45	100%

expensive and prestigeful arranged forms of marriage, especially the SB form, to the cheaper, less prestigeful unarranged *NB* in spite of increased per capita income. Furthermore, the evidence indicates that the primary cause cannot be new values gradually applied after taking up new employment. The key factors responsible are spatial separation from parents or guardians and an independent income. Although the *bustee* Santal maintains his connections with family in the native village and seldom requests a division of the land, his independent income provides him with the *de facto* opportunity to spend as he pleases. Physical distance from his kin frees him from their social control and the supporting authority of the villagers. The shift to *NB* by the *bustee* Santal may then be viewed partially as a decision not to share the major part of their income with their rural extended families. In the village they would not have the financial independence to make such a choice, nor would the social relations with kin and villagers permit such a choice even with a separate income if they continued to live in the village. This interpretation is corroborated

* Industrial cash income was converted into husked paddy according to the prevailing price of rice at the time of marriage and added to farm income in husked rice after taxation.

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by data on marriage obtained from those factory workers for whom the bustee is the native village. Of five such individuals, all had arranged *SB* marriages and had poured the major share of their income prior to marriage into the family coffers. Hence, it takes migration plus the separate income derived from industrial employment to produce a shift to love marriage.

Given that the conditions of migration to industrial employment provide an opportunity for the prospective groom to choose what form of marriage he desires, the question of why he tends to choose the unarranged *NB* remains. The answer appears to be that migration to industrial employment makes marriage primarily a matter of individual concern. In a variety of ways it weakens bonds with extended family, local lineage, and village. Since the bride will not live in the household or the village of the groom's parents, i.e., his native village, neither the parents nor the villagers are so concerned with her. Furthermore, residence in the *bustee* which, as we shall see, is not so solidary as a village, does not facilitate the reciprocal visiting between kin and fellow villagers of the couple which would normally follow a marriage tie. Since migration to industrial employment weakens traditional bonds of solidarity, it not only gives the prospective groom an opportunity to choose an unarranged marriage; it also makes groom, bride, kinsmen, and fellow villagers less desirous of an arranged marriage. All those social ties which are so dramatically expressed in marriage ceremonies and which are consistent with arranged marriages are virtually inoperative for migrants to the *bustee*. Unarranged marriages thus considered are a result of decreased solidarity resulting from migration to industrial employment.

Other considerations may be partially responsible for the

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177 number of immigrant workers present when it comes time to
178 eat the offerings that have been made, drink the rice beer which
184 has been offered, and join in secular dancing for pleasure is
796 invariably greater than those present during the performance
621 of village ceremonials.

It is not that the immigrant workers regard it as wrong to worship the deities of the *bustee*'s Sacred Grove or to offer respect to its priest and founder; on occasion and in varying degrees they will do both. Except for "Old Man Headman" and the boundary deities, the same beings are celebrated in their native villages. It is rather a question of having less attachment than of opposition. As these workers say when asked about non-participation, "It is all right because all is being done properly in my native village."

182 Typically, migration to industrial employment does not re-
423 sult in acquisition of agricultural land at the new place of
464 residence; both limited availability of land in such areas as
621 well as alternative employment make this difficult. Lack of agricultural land belonging to the *bustee* limits identification. Ownership of such land has the opposite effect; as the regular attendance at Daredih's communal ceremonies by immigrant workers who had purchased land there tends to show. Similarly, the Santal have a long history of migration, and Santal who move to a new village where they acquire land show none of the signs of lack of identification characteristic of immigrant workers in Daredih. Thus it is not simply migration which is responsible for diminished solidarity, but migration to industrial employment.

177 The *Baha* festival was, of course, not the only ceremonial
178 casualty of migration to industrial employment of which I saw
184 evidence at Daredih. At the great *Sohrae* festival, held in Oc-
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177 tober when the harvest is in, the final fourth day's rites are
178 eliminated; these are primarily concerned with collecting and
184 stealing rice beer and food from all the houses. During this
796 festival a rite is performed in which the villagers' cows are made to walk over an area where some eggs have been placed. The owner of the cow which first breaks an egg is considered propitious, and he is required to repay the deities for his good fortune by providing the rice beer to be offered on the following year. At the ceremony in Daredih few were in attendance, and that few did not include the immigrant worker whose cow had previously broken the egg, so that another man had to provide the rice beer. Finally, there was a noisy dispute within the *bustee* because the immigrant workers assembled for dancing on the dancing ground (*akhra*) in their section rather than before the house of the headman, as they should have done according to tradition.

At the festival of Sakrat in mid-February, the third most elaborate ceremony, the custom of going house-to-house to collect rice beer is shortened from three days to one day; in addition, a rite in which arrows are shot at pole targets is not practiced. At a village not half a mile further away from the town and only a short distance from Daredih arrow-shooting is practiced; but in this village almost all are native villagers practicing agriculture though the headman and a few others are factory workers besides being farmers. This negative instance of attenuation and non-participation provides further proof of the critical significance of migration to industrial employment.

182 If limited identification with the *bustee* is primarily respon-
184 sible for the decline of ceremony, the time demands of indus-
796 trial employment have been an unwitting accomplice. The time

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demands of factory employment are in certain critical ways different than those of agricultural labor. For example, TISCO works on three eight-hour shifts, while the hours of agricultural labor are typically identical for all. Furthermore, in a number of departments of a steel mill there are no occasions, barring a strike, when all work comes to a standstill. This industrial situation makes it impossible for all Santal workers of the community to be present for a ceremony during any fixed period. Some departments give a leave of absence to all their workers for major Hindu festivals, but Santal ceremonials do not always coincide in time with Hindu ones. Nor could such an adjustment, if desired, be easily made, since Santal villages have no fixed days for their ceremonies and each village chooses a day or several days within the appointed month during which the villagers will be free of agricultural labor.

There is a third factor to be taken account of, though it is so entwined with lack of identification that it may only be distinguished analytically. Since the immigrant workers seldom have agricultural land in the *bustee*, some of the rites performed at various ceremonies which concern agricultural abundance, such as *Baha*, are of diminished interest. To be sure, they probably have land in their native village contributing to their own and their relatives' income, but, as they remark, "It is all right not to participate here because it is all being done properly in my native village." This attitude is closely related to lack of identification since, as already indicated, the place where one has land is likely to be regarded as one's own village. Connected with this attitude is the immigrant worker's intention of eventually retiring to his native village to live off the land. He may even look forward to purchasing his land with his industrial earnings.

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783 the local lineage, but it is filled with the pollution of some unknown *Diku* caste.

Another obstacle to worship that the city Santal encounter is
273 that it is illegal to brew rice beer in the city. This restriction
369 is also cited by the city Santal as a reason why they do not
769 practice ancestor worship. On several occasions the police have interfered with its manufacture in town *bustees*.

177 Were the city Santal able to live side by side in a single sec-
327 tion of the city and to build their own houses, they might at
369 least attain the solidarity of the *bustee* communities. But the
362 policy of alloting houses follows the universalistic principles which TISCO has deliberately fostered. Houses are assigned according to rank in the factory hierarchy and seniority, with personal preference a minor consideration. Thus, the Santal and other ethnic groups are generally dispersed. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that most of those Santal who have chosen to live in Company houses are relatively well educated and highly acculturated; nor is it surprising that the lack of a Santal community in the city is contributing markedly to the Hinduization of the Santal children living there.

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464 Migration to industrial employment has acted as a socio-cultural solvent significantly affecting marriage and ceremonial patterns. Weber's notion of its importance is borne out, but in the cases examined it does not appear to be "the mere fact of living in quite different surroundings" which accounts for its significance. Here its effect seems largely due to its tendency to disrupt traditional social bonds. In the absence of such disruption, as in the case of the natives of Daredih, it seems that traditional practices evolved in a context far removed from urban-industrial conditions are surprisingly viable. These findings support Nash's contentions about the importance of mi-

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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121 gration in producing change and, conversely, provide additional
• 182 evidence of how little change may accompany industrial em-
464 ployment in the absence of migration. Since rural migration produces none of the effects of migration to industrial employment and since industrial employment per se does not produce the changes described either, the combination must be studied in its own right.

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Chapter 5 The Extent of Hindu Absorption

182 The effects of migration to industrial employment thus far
464 analyzed have been to accelerate the decline of Santal solidarity among the Santal generally and especially among Santal industrial workers. It has thus furthered the same tendency which the closure of the political rank path and the spread of the
177 market and of increased wealth differences accelerated. Before
771 moving on, it is useful to consider how much Hindu social
127 absorption has accompanied this decline in solidarity.

Indian census material on religious identification is often cited as evidence of Hindu social absorption. Converting such figures on the southern Santal to percentages, the following table can be constructed. Conclusions from these figures, which indicate very little in the way of a trend, must be drawn with extreme caution.

127 My own field observations suggest that these figures do not
177 reflect major changes in religious belief and practice. There
178 are virtually no villages where half or even one-tenth of the Santal practice Hindu rituals distinct from the ritual practices
771 of the other Santal residents, nor is there some sizable propor-

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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other tribes resident in the areas. It is a very difficult but fascinating task to find out which of them are typically Santal and which borrowed, as culture-loans from the neighbouring tribes, either Muṇḍà or hinduised Aboriginals. 177

This material aspect of Santal life is indissolubly linked up with its religious and clan features. We shall see in the forthcoming pages how the Santals invoke their gods to bless them with bumper-crops, how they seek protection for their hunting-dogs and cattle from the attack of wild animals by prayers to the deities. Thus the communal worship of the tribe has for its object the securing of good luck and avoiding bad luck for the tribe as its material background. 771 182 [782] [777]

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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into customary laws. The Santal has, in his own way, learned to value the corporate discipline necessary under social life. He has built up his own body of traditions and customs and has appointed proper custodians to look over them, to administer them for the well-being of the tribe on the earth. Nobody expects from the Santal the cultural level we associate with the civilized races in India, but enquirers into their manners and customs must be struck with the correlation of the cultural evolution of the tribe with its material and environmental back-ground, noticed in the previous chapters.

Scholars of Pre-Dravidian life have noticed the communistic aspect of their society. In many instances, this holds true of Santal life. The leadership of the tribe, whether social or socio-religious as exercised by the Headman or the Priest, is exercised with due restraint because of the check imposed by the consultative body known as "*Monren hor*." Thus Santal tribal judgments have that provision for justice and fair-play which all civilised societies crave. That such democratic ideas permeate the whole tribe will be apparent from the practice of offering gifts to the member in whose house there is festival going on. To a people who are remarkably poor like the Santals, this practice lightens the burden of the house-holder, bound by custom to provide community feasts and drinks, apart from

3i Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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105 182 431 being an evidence of fraternal virtues of co-operation.

105 181 421 836 Although ideas of individualism have saturated the Santal social fabric and they now own private property, and have personal ownership over many things, communistic ideas in origin can be easily traced in the custom which allows all bachelors of the tribe to have free access and intercourse with the unmarried girls of the tribe barring of course customary prohibited degrees and relations.

105 593 Evidence of discipline in family life can be easily noticed. Their heads of families are held in great esteem and their commands are carried out [611] respectfully. Although the family is patrilineal and patripotestal, the mother has her natural voice in the family-life and women, notwithstanding all their legal disabilities, have their moral rights assured.

105 181 582 Nowhere is the democratic authority of the appointed guardians of the tribe in better evidence than in the cases of marriage regulations. It is in the administration of these that we can see the will of the Santals finds fullest play. We have seen in the foregoing pages how clan-incest is detested and how the erring ones undergo penance and restored to the tribe. It is the tribal council, the sacred [623] repository of all customs and traditions, that main- [684] tains intact the tribal solidarity and purity by out-casting the man and woman who have become

3i Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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mediums of pollution to the tribe and thereby to its security and well-being. The Santal does not take recourse to such social ostracism so much from motives of punishment as from a sense of defence against some external sin visiting the tribe; and by restoring the delinquent to the tribal fold, they want to communicate afresh the "mana" (taboo-holiness) which he was supposed to have lost by his action.

In conclusion we may say that there is a close inter-relation between the material culture, the social organization and the tribal government of the Santals. By taking recourse to various means the Santal has, in his own way, solved the problem of the struggle for existence. This we have seen in detail in the chapter on "Economic Life." Here we have seen how by their tribal polity, they have devised measures as to how to live an orderly life to achieve that security without which life on earth degenerates into the anarchy of the jungle.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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595 (3) Hirom Cetan Bapla.

Although tribal custom generally favours monogamous marriages, a fairly large number of Santals in Mayurbhanj have a number of lesser wives. This form is called as *Hirom Cetan Bapla*, which means 'a union while a co-wife exists'. The first wife is known as *Bòtki*, while the second passes on as *Chutki*. That this form often degenerates into mere concubinage will be apparent from the fact that they are popularly termed "Rakhni Priya" in Mayurbhanj, which means a mistress additionally maintained. These wives are allowed all the privileges of wives. And when they die, the husband applies vermilion on their forehead, thus legitimising them finally.

Conclusion

585 Marriage amongst the Santals serves as the
885 stepping stone to the adult life of the tribesman.
182 Apart from the biological aspect of the increase to the population and thereby to the strength of the tribe, it makes a young Santal a full-fledged member of the community, endowed with all the rights and duties of the adult. On the economic side, the
585 Santal now gets a partner in life on payment of a
182 price; and in its social aspect, it means the beginning of a new family, a further source of strength to the clan and then to the tribe.

3t Mukherjea O, Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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One scrutinising the attendant marriage ceremonials must be struck by the fact that many of them aim at the union of the souls of the married couple along with their physical bodies. The tying of the ends of the cloths worn by the husband and the wife and their eating together, are instances on the point. Something more than this is sought after to ensure the steadfast obedience of the wife to the husband when the former eats a meal soaked in the water with which her husband's feet have been washed.

The same anxiety for the future welfare of the married couple is revealed in processes to guard the luck, and to exclude the evil omens, as by the beneficent and luck-conferring virtues of the mango-twigs in a water-pot. And we must not forget that omen-reading is the first essential of all Santal marriages. In this respect, they go so far as to marry the parties to dogs or trees to do away with the supposed evil effects of their teeth having appeared earlier in the upper gum. Nor must we overlook the fact that the married couple not only belong to each other but to the wider life of the clan and the tribe. This communion of the bride with her husband's people is ensured by the girl offering rice-beer and tooth-sticks to the bridegroom's party. And by ceremonial baths and anointing the body with turmeric paste, the Santals

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
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585 182 783 want to purify the couple from the evil effects of chance pre-marital sex-connections (a rare phenomenon with educated Santals), thereby neutralising the dangers to the family and the tribe.

585 179 182 Many of these ceremonials are closely analogous to Hindu practices; and have probably been borrowed and are thus due to culture contact, although it is not improbable that the Hindus themselves might have at an early period assimilated some similar Pre-Dravidian practices. Whatever that may be, one must notice that Santal marriages are closely associated with religion as is indicated by offering of vermilion to *Maraṅ Buru* and a goat to the dead ancestors. Thus we find that marriage no longer remains a civil contract of getting a partner in life on payment of a price, but takes the form of a sacrament as well.

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FUNERAL CEREMONIES

764 The Santals have their own funeral customs. When a death takes place in the tribe, the village Headman and the elders flock together at the house in mourning, when they rub the dead body with oil and turmeric. Now, the corpse is taken out of the house in a *khatia* (a stringed bed-stead), placed in the yard and cleansed with cow-dung and water. A handful of paddy is spread over the spot and some thrust into the right palm of the deceased and thrown down some time later. The bier is next

3i Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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most mysterious of all episodes in human life. He associates a death in the tribe as an event which necessitates segregation of the family and the clan visited by the calamity, and not until they undergo ceremonial purification, are they thought entitled to the fuller life of the tribe, and this re-union is effected by a final community meal.

In all these socio-religious rites, the whole Santal society of the locality acts like one man. Here is a supernatural danger visiting a family. Unless the full co-operation of the tribe is received, it may be an occasion for the unconscious contamination to injure the tribe itself by its mysterious infection. So the man affected by a death in the family looks up to the tribe for help and sympathy, and the tribe in its turn helps its members during the crisis, by propitiating the super-human powers beyond our ken, who alone know the key to the mysterious phenomena round about humanity.

It is very easy to notice here also, the undoubted influence of Hinduism in the funeral customs of the Santals. But, whereas the Hindus have universalised the individual with the eternal essence, and have woven a theory of universal humanity by offering *Pindas* even to the unknown dead, their formula being "*Jagaddhitaya Krishnaya*," (to Sri Krishna, the Lord of the Universe, for the good of the Universe), the Santal, although not dreaming

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
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76 177 619 of going so far, has, according to his own ideas, sought to propitiate the departed spirit and his ancestors by suitable libations in the interests of tribal solidarity, which is his first concern on earth.

• 182 619 This tribal unity under a rigid frame-work serves the Santal as a bulwark against unforeseen dangers, supernatural powers, anti-social activities of the members of the tribe, and hosts of other malignant powers and influences. So it is that the tribe has built up a social organisation and customs intended to fuse the diverse elements into a homogeneous whole, and has, by appropriate rituals, ceremonials and libations, sought to establish a medium for communion with the invisible powers that guard their destinies.

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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the turning points, when wind and weather decide the fate of the harvest. These aspects of the material life of the Santal are sought to be guarded by appropriate ceremonials and rituals to the tribal deities, so that the beneficent may protect the harvest, and the malevolent *Boŋgas* may be shorn of their malign influence. These sacrifices and libations to deities and ancestor-spirits are closely associated with all Santal public festivals, when, with community feasts, they ensure their material and spiritual well-being in a co-ordinated and organised ritual.

Various are indeed the risks with which the tribe is threatened. Rain may not fall in season ; there may again be too much of it. Locusts may eat up the corn grown, and as the people look up to these baffling mysteries of existence, they look for confidence, and want to secure good luck for themselves and their tribe. Through these festivals, the Santals want to establish a communion with the super-human powers, by first of all propitiating them with the hope that they, in their benevolence, may influence the destinies of the tribe at such turning points in the material life of the tribe.

All these religious worships attached to the festivals are community worship. While in the midst of such festivals and attendant invocations to deities, the Santal feels elevated out of this ordinary

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4.5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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105 day-to-day life into a region of emotions which
796 enables him to establish a sort of a link with the
78 invisible presiding deities of the tribe. So economic
182 factors are linked with social ones, and religion and religious practices are inter-related to strengthen social ties, which the Santal prizes above everything else.

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evidence showing the influence of Hindu ideas on Santal magical practices. In the race of life, the Santal finds inexplicable super-normal phenomena. He does not know how to react to the unknown and unknowable; so he has recourse to magic to deal with the impersonal forces and energies through appropriate rites and spells. This is done not by all the Santals, but only by the *Ojha*, a specialist in the art of magic and witch-craft. And he is generally the common doctor for all the Hinduised tribes and the Muṇḍà people. What the witch-doctor does is to practise the art of dissociating himself with the aim of spirit-communication, when he chants some magic formulae and makes the patent gestures while he performs the time-honoured rites to conjure the spirits. All these he does with the aid of some spirits, and although his mission is like the priest of religion to attain curative results that endure to the benefit of Santals individually or the tribe taken as a whole, it cannot be said that anti-social results do not follow due to the activities of some malignant *Ojhas* out to wreak personal vengeance on their enemies with the aid of malevolent spirits.

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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SANTAL PARGANAS

771 782 796 Thus in religion proper the main attitude of Santal Society towards the supernatural, is one of reverential fear in the presence of certain mysterious supernatural powers and beings and dependence on and propitiation to and prayerful submission to them, and the result expected is the averting of the ill-will and securing the good will of the supernatural beings and good luck to man in crops and cattle, health and progeny.

771 796 769 782 [784] The Santal religion is also not a little concerned with ancestral and certain other disembodied souls and Nature-spirits and deities. The rites employed to establish relations with them are mainly supplications and prayers, offerings of sacrifices and the ceremonial sharing of sacrificial food besides certain special observances and taboos.

771 [754] [796] The Santal believe that the supernatural influence is not often inimical and evil. Their idea is that there is no possibility of malevolent influence being turned to a benevolent or good one, the only practical question for them is how to stop it and, in the case of witches, how to stop and punish it. Bongas and witches know how to do evil to people but more often than not also how to do them good.

771 829 [182] The Santal religion in its social aspect is essentially a tribal matter and has helped to strengthen the social unity and quicken the sense of social responsibility, and his concept of righteousness is bound up with his social or tribal consciousness. As the Santal Society has not yet got much beyond a limited tribal consciousness his conception of righteousness is not concerned with the essential or absolute standard of righteousness of things.

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sand on the pathways becomes unbearably hot for our feet. Pigs were killed at dawn, cut, and the meat was roasted first thing so that it would be ready when the people returned home. The day turned out to be very warm. Some men went into the village of G—— because of their thirst to get a drink of beer, and they said: 'One pice worth of beer from G—— is as good as six pice of beer from that other place.' " The market is the main shopping centre for the villagers. There are cloth stalls and stalls of imported trinkets and ornaments. Potters, weavers, blacksmiths, purveyors of "medicines" and many others display their wares. The Santals may have grain for sale in a good year; they sell fowls and vegetables and buy their salt and cooking oil regularly, with other commodities at need. The market is a great place for the exchange of gossip, for meeting friends and relatives; it is here that many flirtations begin and matches are set in hand.

Nevertheless, the main business of the Santals' life, round which most of their activities centre, is to wrest from the poor soil the greatest possible amount of food. The struggle leaves little time for philosophizing, but they do sometimes crystallize in a phrase some bitter lesson from experience, as when they say: "Rain in the morning, like a friendship that is easily made, does not last." They work as hard as their social obligations allow. There is nothing distinctive in their methods of agriculture, and for generations they have been accustomed to settled cultivation and the use of the plough. The division of labour between men and women, the taboo against women handling the plough, they share with the surrounding culture. They observe the same propitious days and seasons for sowing and reaping as their neighbours. A great authority on the Santals has said:[1] "They are on their way to becoming agriculturalists, but are, as yet, far behind. . . . They have not as yet learnt the need for and the benefits of weeding and manuring, or of changing the crops, and much more. For example, they do not take proper care of their cattle. These are mostly herded by children, who use much of the time for their own games and pleasures. When the paddy is harvested, the cattle are permitted to roam about. A direct result of this is that it is impossible for people to have any crops standing after the middle of December or thereabouts; the cattle would

[1] P. O. Bodding, *Studies in Santal Medicine and Connected Folklore*, Pt. III, "How the Santals live", *Memoirs of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1940, Vol. X, No. 3, p. 434.

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• 182
[233]

eat all; and the Santals only very rarely fence anything in." The same statement could be applied to the backwardness of Indian peasant agriculture in general, and although it presents a recognizable picture it is somewhat unfair. It fails to take account of the formidable difficulties in the way of the Santals over which they have no control, and it ignores the fact that there is among them a fund of inherited practical wisdom and acquired skill of no mean order.

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the appearance of a coloured chequer board, while others have rectangular blocks of colour—red, black and yellow. On some houses there are geometrical patterns, and a favourite design represents plantain trees. Imaginative artists find scope on some of the walls and draw designs incorporating flowers, birds and animals and stylized but animated figures of men and women; on one occasion I observed the figure of an aeroplane in blue, red and yellow earth, giving a tolerable imitation of camouflage paint. The forms are limited by the technique, the drawings being done with the fingers of the right hand dipped in the colours.

The decay of primitive artistic culture in India has attracted the widespread attention of students. Over wide areas tribespeople are being encouraged to be ashamed of their dances and songs, and their arts are dying out. It does seem, however, that at least in some areas the Santals are keeping alive their traditional arts and music, and that it is virile enough to find expression in the creation of new forms. Herein lies one of the greatest causes for hopefulness concerning the future of the tribe. It says much for their social life that they maintain these institutions in spite of their depressed economic condition and their status as a small minority in nearly all the areas where they live. Hitherto they have been spared from the dangers of a uniform national system of education, and it remains to be seen how much of their artistic life will survive the "planning" that is now in vogue.

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CHAPTER 6

MYTHS AND THE CLAN ORGANIZATION

MANY of the social activities of the Santals are based on myths, and the strength of their clan organization is due in no small measure to its foundations in mythology. An examination of the intimate relationship between the two bears out the truth of such a statement as: "The sacred lore of the tribe is not a fanciful tale told in explanation of natural phenomena and inexplicable events, but a method of expressing certain ways of thinking and feeling about the facts of life and of regulating human actions."[1] When for any reason a piece of ritual associated with a myth falls into disuse, knowledge of that myth begins to die out; conversely, when the myth is looked upon as outmoded, the activity with which it is linked begins to lose its hold on the people's imagination. The Santal story of the origin of man and the division of the human race into clans does not appear to be known today in more than outline form, except by a very few, mostly of the older generation. It is recited in the village only on certain occasions—the *caco chatiar* ceremony, at which a child is formally admitted into the privileges of full membership in the tribe; the *Jom Sim* festival, an occasional clan celebration; and the *Karam* festival, which is an affair of the village. None of these institutions has a vigorous life in the area; the *caco chatiar* ceremony of today retains only a vestige of its ancient glory, the *Jom Sim* is very rarely performed, and the same is true of the *Karam* in its full form.[2] The village headman has to recite the myth, but not every headman now is capable of doing so. The decay of the ritual is leading to the disappearance of the ancient myth. It is nevertheless still true that these stories do reveal the Santal view of the world. When they are told they call forth assent, and frequently in ordinary conversation the myths are cited in order to point a moral or clinch an argument. Though there are few who are ready to recite the whole story, some part of it is still familiar to everyone.

The Santal story of the origin of man has been recorded in slightly varying form by different authorities.[3] It did not escape

[1] E. O. James, *Comparative Religion*, Methuen, 1938, p. 335.

[2] Further reference is made to these festivals in the chapter on "Festivals".

[3] The fullest account in English is in *Traditions and Institutions of the Santals*, translated with notes and additions by P. O. Bodding from the Santali text published in 1887 by L. O. Skrefsrud, edited (after the translator's death) by Sten Konow. Oslo, 1942.

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the centre forms the apex of a triangle. The main beam rests on these walls with rafters sloping from it down to the other two walls. The resulting roof has only two thatches, sloping to the front and the back of the house respectively. The Gar or Fort Murmu are able to provide but little information about their origin, but they maintain their distinctive tradition in the matter of the sub-clan sacrifice. It is performed during the month October-November out in one of their own rice fields. The one sacrificing has to observe the customary abstinence of priests during the previous night, and the sacrifice takes place just after the sun has risen in the morning. A circle of flour paste is made on a spot levelled and cleaned for the purpose, and a larger circle of white stones is constructed round it. All who are going to partake of the flesh have to remain within this enclosure. First of all they sacrifice a black hen, which can be eaten by men only. Next they sacrifice a pig, the flesh of which may be eaten by the women as well. After this they sacrifice a white hen and finally a brown hen, and again it is only the men who may partake of these. The gathering and the attendant feasting last through the whole day, and they return to their houses at nightfall, leaving no food. They believe that some misfortune will fall on them if they have not finished eating while daylight lasts.

There is a sub-clan of the Ṭuḍu known as the Kāṛā or Blind Ṭuḍu which is accounted for in the following way: "The first Kāṛā Ṭuḍu placed a torn cloth behind the fireplace in his house. In the evening when his wife went to cook she found the cloth there and cooked the supper herbs wrapped up in it. Then the man who had put the cloth down came to look for it, and not seeing it behind the fireplace he asked his wife if she had seen it. 'Yes,' she replied, 'it must be the one in which I wrapped the supper herbs.' They raked out the fire and the ashes and saw that she had in fact burnt that cloth."

Many of the points that have been raised in this chapter cannot be understood apart from matters that are dealt with in subsequent chapters. The stories have been gathered together in this way in order to bring out the fact that in the clan system of the Santals and in the myths that form its background there is a key to the understanding of nearly everything that is distinctive in their way of life. The clan organization regulates their behaviour within the tribe and their dealings with the spirits. They accept its rule without question, and so long as they live in closely knit village communities this system, with its manifold implications, will continue to control their lives.

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778 it impossible to build a house. They were indigo planters, whose
173 compound lay to the south of the shrine. Every time they tried to build the walls would crack, so in the end they offered a libation of their spirits to Lokhon Mañjhi and all was well. In
178 recent times a Bengali Christian has built himself a house
778 between the old indigo compound, now the mission compound, and the shrine without so far having suffered any dire consequences, but Binu would stoutly affirm that he makes offering to Lokhon in secret!

782 The main intention of the Santal cult of sacrifice is to ensure
• 182 the stability of the society and the wellbeing of its members. The usual burden of the prayers and invocations, the *bakhet*, is to threaten or cajole the spirits so that sickness may be kept away from the village and that the rains may not fail. The example of a prayer that has been quoted[1] throws light on the attitude of the worshipper and the language that he uses. The prayer is the accompaniment of certain material offerings, and a strong hope is expressed that *Marañ Buru* will find the gifts adequate; there is, in fact, more than a suggestion that he ought to find them sufficient and do his duty in return. While material benefits are mainly sought,[2] this particular example reveals that Santal worshippers do sometimes look beyond the needs of the moment, for it is a prayer for a blessing of long life and happi-
782 ness to be bestowed on a newly married couple. The language of
[195] the prayers is rhythmical; doublet words with rhyming endings
[191] and frequent repetition convey to the ear an effect similar to that given by rhymed verse. Often the prayers are spoken in colloquial Bengali, though the language in this case is Santali. The words themselves are not conceived of as "magical" in the sense that any alteration in their form or the omission of particular words would nullify the efficacy of the formula. There is obviously an element of magic in the ritual employed in sacrificing, but the prayers are uttered as accompaniment to the actions in order to draw the attention of the spirits to the latter. Most often the one who is uttering the prayer uses a loud and threatening tone of voice.

776 There is no individual approach to the *bongas*. Fellowship
782 with them is maintained through sacrifices that are offered on

[1] See p. 67 above.

[2] Cf. E. O. James, *Comparative Religion*, 1938, p. 278: "In a primitive agricultural community requests for ethical and moral virtues could hardly be expected, since, as Cicero remarks, 'men call Jupiter greatest and best because he makes us not just or temperate or wise, but sound and healthy and rich and wealthy'." The citation is from *De Nat. Deorum*, III, 36, 87.

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addition to the bride price, to receive a cloth for the bride's mother, one for her father's eldest sister and one each for her two grandmothers.

Some agreement must also be reached about the time of the marriage. This must not take place in the month in which either the bridegroom or bride was born. Formerly, I was told, there was no other prohibition regarding the month. Nowadays, however, the general practice of Hindus in Northern India is followed. Astrologers are not consulted, but marriages may not take place during the rains, and the most popular months are during the spring when the harvest has been gathered in and food is abundant. When the time is approaching, the actual date of the wedding is arranged by the go-between, and the *giṛa* is used to mark off the days remaining.

The whole community in both villages is vitally concerned in the due celebration of the wedding, and this fact is emphasized by the role of the village officials. The *jogmaṛjhi* of the bride's village acts as the master of ceremonies from the time when the marriage booths have to be erected until the end. The headman of the bridegroom's village does not take part in the preliminary visits by virtue of his office, but when the two families immediately involved are satisfied that they wish to proceed, both headmen are called in. They have to be present when the engagement is confirmed, and they are consulted about suitable dates. The final "contract" at the climax of the wedding celebrations is entered into by the people of the two villages, and it is made by the respective headmen. The village priest also plays a part, for the community involved in the marriage includes the spirits, who are guardians of the welfare of the tribe, and the ancestors, guardians of family and clan. Their blessing has to be sought. In an interesting passage Dr. Verrier Elwin says of the marriage ceremonial of the tribes of the Maikal hills: "There is little religion in it." On any definition of religion it would be difficult to maintain this thesis with regard to Santal marriage. The whole passage is quoted here, for the rest of what is said does apply in most of its detail to the Santal form of marriage: "We have already spoken of this ceremony as a work of art. There is little religion in it, but it has great social and symbolic value. It is hard to conceive of a better way of impressing on a man and woman their social and sexual union. The tying together of the clothes, the exchange of rings, the first meals together, the ceremonies by the river that symbolize mutual aid in domestic, sexual and food-obtaining activities, are of great significance.

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585 They are all the more important because some of them are things
• 182 that a boy and girl would never do publicly together."[1] Among the Santals many of the symbolic acts cannot be truly interpreted apart from their relation to the unseen world. The invocations used in addressing the spirits at the time of marriage come as near to true prayer as any used at other times.[2] Before the
585 wedding party leaves the bridegroom's village for the home of
[431] the bride, the bridegroom's father provides a hen for the village
[182] priest, who offers it in the sacred grove. He prays: "We offer to
[539] you a hen because of the marriage booth. Accept it, enjoy it and grow big. Now we are about to go as a marriage party to such and such a village. Guard us so that on the way through the forest there may be no sudden fright, no tripping, no tumbling, no spells, no enchantments. Clear the way for us to right and to left, O father spirits. There we shall eat and drink. May we suffer no stomach pains, no head pains. Guard us also so that there be no quarrels, no bickerings, no divisions, no disturbances, no ruin, no spoiling between relations."

[343] Before the marriage, booths are erected in the courtyards of
[476] both homes, and all the villagers assist in the work. Straw ropes are strung from side to side in the village street with mango leaves inserted through the strands, and the courtyards are decorated in the same manner. The posts of the booths are made with branches of the *mahkom* tree. In the floor a hole is dug in which some fresh turmeric mixed with sun-dried rice, five cowrie shells and three leaves of *dhubi*[3] grass are buried. These are covered in and then the whole floor is plastered with cowdung. The young men who build the booth are feasted and provided with beer. On the day before setting out for the bride's village the bridegroom's party go to the village bathing place for the "water marriage". One of the young men digs a small hole at the water side into which the water can seep and three arrows are planted round the hole. Vermilion is placed on the arrows, while at their base are placed some cowrie shells and a hen's egg. One of the women shoots at the water with an arrow, while another strikes it with a "sword", generally a stick. Then libations of beer are poured out to *Marak Buru* and the ancestors before all present partake. Finally, water is drawn in pots and taken to the home. Again when they reach the courtyard another hole is dug, the arrows are placed round it and the water

[1] V. Elwin and S. Hivale, *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills*, p. 103.
[2] One example has been quoted in Chapter 6, p. 67.
[3] *Cynodon dactylon*, Pers. Reg.